

Feb 7 1971 Herald

Road Commission Hears Citizens Group Against Highway Through Provo Canyon

By RON BARKER

The Provo Canyon Highway Citizens Committee has apparently failed in its attempt to get the State Road Commission to observe a moratorium on construction of the proposed four lane, limited access highway in the canyon.

D. Allan Firmage, chairman of the citizens group, and other committee members met with the Road Commission in Salt Lake City Friday to try to get the commission to halt the project until nine points of procedure could be met. One of the points called for a resource inventory of the canyon and an ordering of priorities for canyon use.

Mr. Firmage and committee members said they didn't want "to buy what the road commission was selling," and they are opposed to the concept of a four-lane, limited access highway. "We don't think that's the best solution," said Mr. Firmage.

Optimum Design

The citizens group wanted to go over the highway mile by mile with the Road Commission in order to come up with an optimum design. Mr. Firmage is chairman of the Civil Engineering Department at Brigham Young University and a qualified civil engineer.

Lowell Christensen, another member of the citizens group and a Utah County realtor, said he didn't feel the citizens of Utah County had been properly represented by their elected officials. He also said he felt it was amazing that there was no master plan for Provo Canyon.

State Road Commissioner Wayne Winters of Pleasant Grove asked if he felt a moratorium should be observed for all construction in the canyon, and not just road construction. "As far as I am concerned, I'd like to see that," said Mr. Christensen. "I think zoning, sewer, housing and road problems should be taken into consideration, and the natural beauty of the canyon preserved."

More Hearings

Verl Clark, a Provo businessman who serves on the citizens committee, said that his group was not one of "vested interests." He also told the commission that the Provo Kiwanis Club had recently voted

to support the concept of a moratorium, and he urged the commissioners to consider more public hearings on the project.

Mr. Winters noted that further public hearings would be held for the part of the road beyond Wildwood, but observed the hearing on the portion of the road from the mouth of the canyon to Wildwood had been held in August 1969, "with little opposition" expressed. About 80 persons attended the hearing.

Times have changed, said members of the citizens committee. Stan Collins, president of the Provo Chamber of Commerce and part owner in Sundance Resort, noted that "we're now living in an environmental age." Although the committee recognizes the need for an improved road, there is a strong difference of opinion on the type of road that will be in the best interests of all concerned.

More Traffic

The road department had stressed repeatedly that its statistics show heavily increased traffic loads in years to come. It is concerned about the volume of traffic the road should handle. Clem Church, the chairman of the Road Commission, observed that he was against restricting the use of the canyon by not developing the road.

Mr. Firmage has challenged the validity of the road engineers' statistics, and claims the data may not have been collected properly. He intends to study their data this week.

The Road Commission has agreed to go over the details of its plans with Mr. Firmage to see if they satisfy his concern for the protection of the natural beauty of the canyon.

Bruce Dixon, representing the Central Utah Section of the American Institute of Architects, said the present road was adequate from a scenic standpoint, and that the proposed four-lane, limited access highway was satisfactory from a traffic movement standpoint. "But there should be a compromise somewhere in between," he said.

Acceptable Solution

Mr. Firmage emphasized that

the citizens group was not trying to fight the commission, but sought to work with it in achieving an acceptable solution to the road problem in the canyon.

The Road Commission has said that it can't produce information on how the road will look in the upper portion of the canyon, although Mr. Winters says the department has studied the problems extensively. Final plans for that part of the road wouldn't be ready until July 1, 1973, he indicated.

Section at Time

The commission maintains that the road must be built a section at a time, and that while there is a "concept" of where the road will go, and a "corridor" is envisioned, the detailed drawings and final design can't be completed until some time after there is a commitment to the road.

Mr. Firmage says he feels it is poor engineering to go in phases without having a pretty good idea where you're going and how. He and the citizens committee want to see what the Road Commission has in mind for the road beyond Wildwood as far as the Deer Creek Reservoir.

The citizens group will meet this week to discuss possible alternative concepts that they could suggest to the Road Commission, and they plan to meet with local elected officials

to try to get their support for reconsideration of the highway. "Many of the letters Mr. Winters has in support of the road are in fact hedged," says Mr. Firmage.

Group Asks Letters to Governor

Opposing Provo Canyon Freeway

The Provo Canyon Citizens Committee opposing the proposed four-lane limited access highway through the canyon today issued a statement urging citizens to write letters to Gov. Calvin L. Rampton protesting the proposal.

The statement was released by D. Allan Firmage, chairman of the committee, following a meeting of the group Monday night.

Names of 14 additional committeemen also were attached to the statement, including Lowell Christensen, Virginia Hayes, Verl Clark, Robert Redford, Ward Heal, Jim Jensen, Stan Collins, Bruce Dixon, Bruce Parry, Richard M.

Taylor, Bob Phelps, David Hansen, Dean Christensen and Charles Y. Warner.

The committee's statement follows in full:

"The Provo Canyon Citizens Committee met with the Utah State Highway Commission on February 5, 1971, for the purpose of arriving at the proper solution to the new Provo Canyon Highway. The committee is against the proposed four-lane limited access highway. At the February 5 meeting, Mr. Wayne Winters stated that the Highway Commission was still in favor of the four-lane highway and he felt the people of Utah and Wasatch Counties were in favor of the four-lane highway since their

elected representatives had sent him letters endorsing this type highway through Provo Canyon.

"The Provo Canyon Citizens Committee feel that the letters sent by the elected officials are no longer representative of the feelings of the citizens of this area. If you are against the four-lane limited access highway but are in favor of road improvements in Provo Canyon, please write to Governor Calvin L. Rampton, State Capitol, Salt Lake City, Utah, telling him that you are in favor of road improvements but not the four-lane limited access highway as proposed by the Utah Department of Highways.

"Write today before it is too late!"

Panel To Eye Provo Canyon

11 Feb 1971 Des. News

The nine-member Environmental Steering Committee of the State Road Commission will meet Feb. 22 to hear reasons for improving the Provo Canyon highway and then will inspect the present highway.

Prof. C. G. Bryner, chairman of the committee, announced today that the group will formulate recommendations to the road commission after the meeting. It will be held at 3 p.m. in the State Office Building, and the visit to the canyon is scheduled soon after.

Present plans of the Highway Department are to advertise for bids April 1 for build-

ing three miles of two-lane highway from Olmstead at the mouth of the canyon to the old Nunn's power plant.

Additional grading will be done as part of the contract so two more lanes and a median strip can be added later.

The road commission on Feb. 5 promised to review its plans for the highway with any groups interested and to make changes where these are found practical and desirable.

Bryner is a member of the University of Utah Civil Engineering Department and of the Division of Environmental Engineering.

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Elected Officials Affirm Support of Canyon Road

By RON BARKER

The Utah State Road Commission met with representatives of governmental bodies from Central Utah in Heber Thursday night to see if the proposed four-lane, limited access highway planned by the state still had the support of the elected officials of the people.

Road Commissioner Wayne Winters received unanimous support from all present, and the state was not only urged to continue, but requested to go ahead with construction as soon as possible. Road commissioners Francis Felch and LaVon Cox also were present. The Provo City Commission,

led by Mayor Verl G. Dixon, was present, as were representatives from Orem, Heber, Utah County, Wasatch County, Summit County and Uintah County.

Provo's Position

Mayor Dixon said, "We believe the state highway department is the best in the United States. We feel the people representing the highway department have improved the design and are conscious of ecological problems. We are completely in accord with the program as outlined by the Road Commission."

Earl Wengreen, Orem city manager, said he had taken a

poll of the Orem City Council Thursday afternoon, "and while the councilmen hope you can preserve and conserve the canyon as much as possible, we're sure you've done this." He also said the Provo Canyon Highway Citizens Committee was being "presumptuous to think that it could speak for the people."

To that, Mayor Dixon added, "You can't allow pressure groups to take over the functions of government, or you won't have any kind of government."

County Supports

Lavern D. Green, the Utah

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Elected Officials Affirm Canyon Highway Support

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County Surveyor, represented the county commission. He read a letter in support of the road, which said, in part: "We think the road will enhance the beauty of the canyon and preserve the ecological value."

Gordon Mendenhall of the Heber City Council, noted that he supported an improved highway through the canyon, but he would "hate to see it end up like Parley's Canyon." He added that Heber took a slightly different view than Provo and Utah County, in that they recognized the economic damage that can result from being passed by a highway.

Uintah County officials said they would support the road as long as the environment is protected. Summit county representatives voiced the same general feeling in support of the road.

Still In Favor

Russell Wall of the Wasatch County Commission, said that his county was still in favor of the road, but that he wanted the railroad line from Wildwood to

Heber preserved. Wayne Winters assured him that the Road Commission was going to keep its commitments to the developers of the railroad, "and we wish them success."

Ron Swenson, an aide to Governor Calvin L. Rampton, told the elected officials, "the governor must take direction from you. I'm convinced that we haven't turned our back on citizens' feeling." He indicated that the governor's office had received numerous letters complaining about the road.

Asks Consensus

Before polling the opinion of the elected officials, Mr. Winters said, "I hope this meeting dispels any idea that there has been a lack of planning on this road. We want to make sure we are responding to the citizens of Utah, and that money is being spent according to popular wishes. We want you to tell us if we are misreading your feelings."

Blaine Kay, engineer for the road, pointed out several of the design features of the highway and called on staff from the highway department to discuss certain aspects of the road.

Mr. Kay noted that the plans at present call for a highway from I-15 in Orem to the junction of U.S. 40 and 189 in Heber.

Howard Leatham, also of the Highway Department, noted that extensive studies they have made show that in 20 years, about 20,000 cars a day will be traveling the canyon highway. "Ten percent of the vehicles using the road now are heavy trucks," he noted, and 52 percent of the road was suited to 45 miles per hour or less. The year long

traffic average in 1969 was 4700 cars per day in the lower canyon and 3500 cars per day in the upper portions. "On summer weekends," Mr. Leatham noted, "the traffic flow was 10,000 cars per day in the lower canyon."

Mr. Kay mentioned that he had met with D. Allan Firmage, chairman of the Provo Canyon Highway Citizens Committee during the day. He indicated that additional meetings will take place. He said he felt that there had been meaningful communication.

Less Acceptable

Lee Sargent said the Highway Department had studied Diamond Fork and Hobbie Creek as possible alternates, but that both routes were higher, more costly, and less acceptable in bad weather.

Several employees of the state highlighted what was being done to preserve the beautiful ecology of the canyon. Highlights are:

— Bridges will span the river without pilings entering the river or damaging the banks on either side.

— An emergency erosion control program during construction will be employed if the project threatens to contaminate the river.

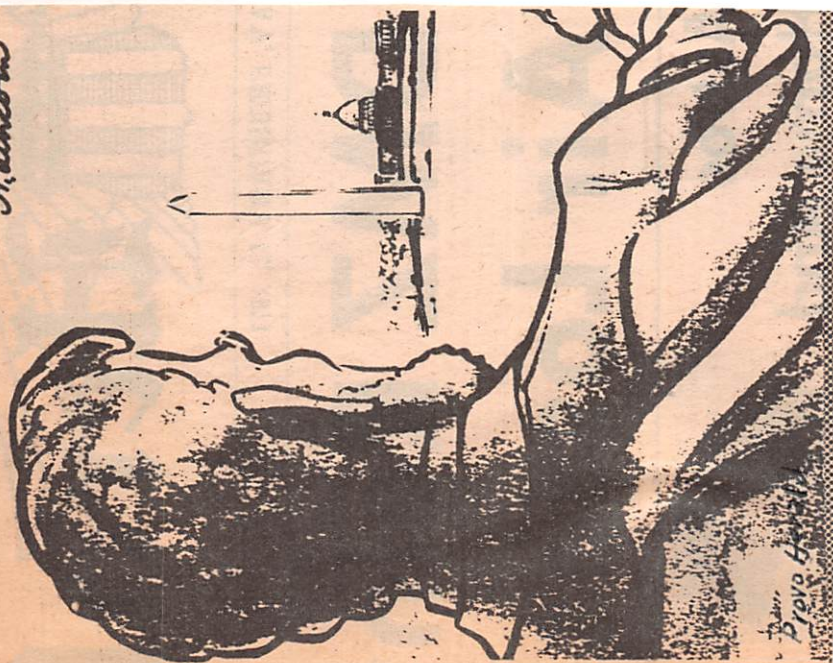
— No improvements at Rotary Park will be touched, and the road will not run over Provo City springs there or at any other location.

— At points below Murdock Diversion Dam, where the river will need to be re-routed for short distances, new techniques will be employed which will as much as possible preserve the stream as a fish habitat.

Mr. Kay announced that a scale model of the road from the mouth of the canyon to Wildwood was being prepared which would show the road in relation to natural and man-made features in the canyon. It will be on display as soon as it is completed.

Let us have faith that right makes
might, and in that faith, let us, to the end,
dare to do our duty as we understand it.

Abraham Lincoln



N.Y. Mayor Skis Sundance

By Ann Shields
Tribune Correspondent

SUNDANCE — Utah's skiing facilities received high praise Saturday during a visit to the state by New York Mayor John V. Lindsay.

Testing the slopes at Sundance along with actor-owner Robert Redford, Mayor Lindsay said, "It's great skiing here. I'm a passionate skier and I like the mountains.

"This is one of the most beautiful areas I've seen in this canyon (Provo Canyon)," the mayor said. "I have a little piece of property up on the mountain near here and I have someday to build a cabin up there."

The mayor said he was in Utah several years ago to speak at the University of Utah and to ski.

When questioned on the issue of putting a speedway through Provo Canyon, the mayor said, "I don't know all of the details of the needs of

the whole area but suffice it to say that I'm increasingly a conservationist, increasingly worried about the despoliation of our countryside's natural beauty.

"In New York City I have fought several battles with

concerns trying to build four and six-lane highways through the few areas of natural beauty we have left," he said. "In my part of the world we find that the highway people are in

a world of their own and they don't seem to care about preservation of the natural things that God provided us."

Mayor Lindsay evaded questions on political efforts, commenting, "You don't want me to talk about that in the middle of the most beautiful ski areas in the United States."



John Lindsay, left, mayor of New York, is guest of actor Robert Redford during skiing trip to

Redford's Sundance resort in Provo Canyon. The bearded Redford now is making a motion picture.

—Tribune Staff Photo by Frank R. Porcchia

Pros, Cons of Provo Canyon Highway

Aired at CC Women's Division Meet

By JOSEPHINE ZIMMERMANN

Pros and cons of the Provo Canyon highway were discussed Friday at a meeting of the Women's Division, Provo Chamber of Commerce, at Riverside County Club.

Approximately 130 women were in attendance to hear the discussion by Ed Lovelace, Highway Department District 6 engineer, and Prof. Allan D. Firmage, chairman of the Citizens for Provo Canyon.

Mr. Lovelace outlined some of the highway plans for Utah County in the next two and a half years, pointing out that the canyon project is only one of the \$13.2 million in highway construction anticipated. He declared that the canyon is a major arterial route to I-80 and US-40, and said that the condition of the road and traffic volume dictate that a new highway is needed.

Traffic To Increase

Mr. Lovelace declared in the next 20 years canyon traffic will equal that carried at present at the Point of the Mountain. The present road is rough, curves prevent adequate sight distance, and maintenance cost is high, he emphasized. He stressed that the highway department is planning a facility adequate for the traveling public while still serving the needs and other

values of the canyon, and making environmental safeguards.

The highway engineer said most of the natural features of the canyon are being preserved to the best of the highway department's ability, and that maximum land use is being utilized by leaving the present highway as an access to the recreational and scenic areas.

Prof. Firmage said his interest in the controversial canyon road comes from a love of the mountains and canyons, and a recognition that we must control our environment. "We can't just let it go and say it is inevitable; we have to hold the line somewhere," he declared.

Prof. Firmage said he has been concerned that elected officials of this area should take the lead in this area, and he has been concerned that "we aren't getting leadership, but only a rubber stamp."

Alternatives

Provo Canyon is so much more than just a traffic passage from Utah County to Wasatch County, Prof. Firmage emphasized, and he asserted that the people have never been presented with alternatives for the canyon road, or any estimate of what affect other roads which are opening up (such as the Diamond Fork road) will have on the volume of traffic.

"I think the people need to be heard, and I challenge the elected officials to hold a public hearing," Prof. Firmage stated. He urged citizens not to let them bulldoze the road through, or "call secret meetings to get the endorsement of public officials."

"Let us as responsible citizens of this county look at all aspects of the canyon," he emphasized. Prof. Firmage pointed out that his training as an engineer caused him to view the canyon project with grave concern, and he pointed out that he had worked in other countries on highway projects.

A lengthy question and answer period followed the two talks.